

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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REPRESENTATIVES OPPOSE ARCTIC REFUGE OIL REVENUE IN PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

123 Dems Send letter to Budget Cmte. Chairman urging the removal of leasing revenue in FY 2005 budget

Washington, D. C. – Today, Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and 122 other Democratic representatives sent a letter to Rep. James Nussle (R-IA), Chairman of the Budget Committee, asking him to reject President Bush's budget request to assume revenue from auctioning oil leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The 123 Democrats oppose the inclusion of revenues from oil activity that is prohibited under current law in the Arctic Refuge.

"The President's budget represents wishful thinking rather than economic reality. Oil leasing is not allowed in the Arctic Refuge, and it is irresponsible of the President to count on \$1.2 billion in revenues from the sale of leases in that pristine wilderness," said Rep. Markey. "The road to America's energy independence does not go through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

Because of the Arctic Refuge contains one of the most magnificent and rare unspoiled ecosystems in the world, Congress in 1980 prohibited oil and gas exploration or production on the coastal plain of the refuge. In April 2003, Rep. Markey offered an amendment to the House energy bill blocking drilling in the Arctic Refuge. The amendment narrowly failed, 197 – 228, but the subsequent conference report preserved the current protections for the Refuge. Furthermore, the majority of Americans have consistently opposed opening this area for oil exploration.

"BP, the oil company formerly known as British Petroleum, the major North Slope oil producer, has given up on oil exploration in the refuge, and the President and the Republican Congress should do the same," concluded Rep. Markey. "As he develops the budget for Fiscal Year 2005, we hope Chairman Nussle will take into account the current law, which does not allow for drilling in the Arctic Refuge. We also encourage him to represent the views of majority of Americans, who do not want to disturb this unique environmental refuge."

Rep. Markey is the chief House sponsor of HR 770, the Morris K. Udall Arctic Wilderness Act of 2003, with Rep. Nancy Johnson and over 140 other co-sponsors. Visit www.house.gov/markey for more information.

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